

ART. V.—Description of two new Species of a new form of Meruline Birds. By B. H. HODGSON, ESQ. Catamandu.

Merulidæ philedones, Cuvier.—*Merulidæ crateropodinae* ? Swainson.—*Tenuirostres meliphagidæ*, Vigors.

Genus—new, *Sibia nobis*. *Sibya* of the Nipalese. *Habitat*. Lower and central regions of the hills.

What shall we say to a Meruline form compounded of the bill and tongue of *Chloropsis*, the nares of *Cinnyris*, and the wings, tail, and feet of *Cinclosoma* ? for such is the general, though not the precisely accurate, indication of the form I am about to describe.

Cuvier has separated from the promiscuous heap of the Meruline Birds a group which he tells us is distinguished from the *Merles* by a slenderer, sharper, and more arched bill, and by a brushed tongue. To this Cuvierian group my birds unquestionably belong ; but the group itself is so large, and its contents have been so little accurately ascertained, that small way is made to a definite conclusion by the determination of that point. There are a vast number of the aberrant Thrushes, both short legged and long, which closely approximate by the bill and tongue towards the *Tenuirostres* ; but I am nevertheless of opinion that these relations are of secondary, not primary, importance. The birds in question are Thrushes, as Cuvier considered them to be ; but whether or not they can be, most of them, ranged with propriety among the *Brachypodinae* and *Crateropodinae* of Swainson, I know too little of his general system to enable me to judge.

It may serve to illustrate the character of our birds to say, that they appear to me to belong to the latter sub-family, serving in many respects to link together the two. Mr. Swainson considers the long-legged Thrushes to be equivalent to the *Tenuirostral Promeropidæ*. It is certainly remarkable that in one of our species we have the long, broad, and gradated tail of *Promerops*.

Genus—SIBIA NOBIS.

Generic character.—Bill and tongue as in *Chloropsis* ; but the bill more depressed and more keeled towards the base ; and the tongue forked as well as brushed. Nares basal, lateral, elongated, pervious, lunated, and almost lineated by a large, soft, sub-arched and nude membrane.

Nareal bristles, none ; rictal, small ; frontal plumes smooth ; wings, medial, round, acuminate, firm ; fifth and sixth quills longest ; first and second considerably, third and four trivially, gradated ; primaries plus tertiaries nearly one inch ; tarsi elevate, stout, nearly smooth ; toes submedial, simple, stout ; fores compressed, hind depressed and large ;

lateral fores and hind subequal, last strongest ; nails stout, moderately curved, acute ; tail various, as in *Promerops* or in *Cinclosoma*.

Species 1st. *Pieaoïdes*. Pie-like *Sibia mihi*. Saturate slaty-blue ; paler and greyer below ; darker and merging into black on the wings and tail ; speculum on the secondaries, and tips of the rectrices, white ; legs plumbeous ; bill black ; iris sanguine ; tail very long, and gradated conspicuously and equally throughout ; head not crested ; 14 inches long and as many wide ; bill $1\frac{1}{8}$ inch ; tarsus $1\frac{1}{4}$; central toe $\frac{3}{4}$; hind toe $\frac{9}{16}$; its nail $\frac{7}{16}$; tail $8\frac{1}{2}$; weight $1\frac{1}{2}$ to $1\frac{3}{4}$ oz. Sexes alike.

Species 2nd. *Nigriceps*. Black-capt *Sibia mihi*. Rusty, with the entire cap and the wings and tail, internally, black ; central wing coverts white toward their bases, slaty toward their tips ; outer webs of the primaries slaty-grey ; of the secondaries and tertiaries, slaty ; the last, rusty, like the body ; two central rectrices con-colourous with the body towards it, then black ; the rest wholly black, and all with broad slaty points ; bastard wing black ; legs fleshy brown ; bill black ; iris brown ; tail moderately elongated, gradated only in the six laterals ; head with a full soft garruline crest ; outer web of the secondaries rather enlarged, discomposed, and curled downwards ; size $8\frac{1}{2}$ to 9 inches, by $10\frac{1}{2}$ to 11, and $1\frac{1}{2}$ oz. in weight ; bill 1 inch ; tarsus $1\frac{5}{16}$; central toe $\frac{10}{16}$, and nail $\frac{4}{16}$; hind toe $\frac{7}{16}$, and nail $\frac{6}{16}$; tail $4\frac{1}{4}$. Sexes alike.

3rd. Species. *Nipalensis, nobis*. Described already as a *Cinclosoma*,¹ and forming a singular link of connexion between the *Cinclosomæ* and the *Sibiæ*. I postpone what I have to say upon the habits and manners of these birds to a future opportunity ; at present it must suffice to observe, that they are indissolubly linked to the *Merulidæ* by the nature of their food and manner of taking it.

Nepaul May, 1836.

ART. VI.—On the Egyptian system of Artificial Hatching. By
DON SINBALDO DEMAS.

Several unfruitful attempts have been made in different parts of Europe since the labours of Reaumur to introduce the artificial mode of hatching eggs. In some parts chickens have been brought forth which have not propagated ; in others, for instance in Aranjuez, instead of chickens, hard eggs have been made. Notwithstanding these failures, being persuaded that they proceeded rather from ignorance on the part of the experimentalist than from any real or insuper-

1 Note.—As Soc. Transac. Phy. Class., vol. xix. p. 143.